

**NOTICE:** All provider agencies that receive this publication are **REQUIRED** to distribute this update in a timely manner to **ALL** therapy practitioners and/or case managers contracted or employed by your agency. Thank you so much for all you do!

Please note – During the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to work in a very fluid situation and directives can and do change **rapidly**. This *Therapist Updates* is current as of the time of release, but therapists and readers should follow the latest guidance available.

### Therapy Services Information

**DDSD will be hosting another DDW Therapy provider virtual meeting on Friday, 12/11/20 from 1-2pm. We will be joined at the beginning of the call by DDSD Acting Director, Scott Doan and DDSD Deputy Director, Marc Kolman. Watch for the meeting invitation and additional details. We will use a platform that allows for a large number of participants.**

November was marked by a dramatic increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in New Mexico and nationally. The outlook for December is concerning and the situation remains very fluid. We are all impacted by this virus, both personally and professionally.

All residents, including health care professionals must abide by the most current Public Health Orders (PHOs) issued by the Governor's Office (<https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/>). Be aware of the latest DDSD Guidance documents (<https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>) and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) related to COVID-safe practices. Links to the website and the most current updates are on page 2 of this document. Please provide remote services whenever possible and continue to be very careful.

I am aware of the extraordinary efforts that you are making to serve your clients in difficult times. As always, reach out to us with any questions, concerns or if you just need to touch base. The Clinical Services Bureau staff and Consultants are available by email. We will get back to you.

I have hope that by next winter we will be able to see the other side of this unprecedented time. We will be closer to gathering with our family and friends, celebrating with food, laughter and hugging one another. For now, be safe and best wishes for a quiet and happy holiday season.

Betsy

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#### **Vaccine Update:**

The COVID-19 vaccine is in the news and I have received several calls already. Although it is not yet available, planning and outreach for vaccine distribution has already been initiated by the Epidemiology Response Division of DOH. The details are not finalized yet but will be based on national guidance and requirements. DOH and the Senior Management of DDSD will provide information about the COVID -19 vaccination plan when it is available.

Don't forget the Flu! We are all so anxious to get the COVID-19 vaccine approved and distributed, that it's easy to overlook the availability and effectiveness of the Flu vaccine! At this writing, it is unknown if the flu season will be better or worse due to COVID-19. We do know that influenza vaccines are widely available and are strongly encouraged – especially for health care providers. If you feel a little under the weather after a flu vaccine, it just means your immune system is healthy and responding to the vaccine! Many people in DDSD services are immune compromised and cannot tolerate a flu vaccine. They are totally dependent on those of us who can tolerate a flu shot to keep them protected.

DDW Physical Therapy providers are needed in **Farmington** and **Gallup**. If you are available to add anyone to your caseload in these areas, please contact Felicia Vidro or Mary Beth Schubauer to get more information.

### COVID-19 Information

- **The DDSD COVID-19 site** <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/> consolidates information especially relevant to DDSD providers including: all DDSD COVID-19 Numbered Response Memos; Guidance Documents; Policies; and a variety of very helpful Resource Documents.
- Please refer to the DDSD memo dated 10/1/2020 for a summary of the guidance that was current as of that date. Except for the new mass gathering limit decreasing from 10 to 5 persons, all information provided is current as of the date of this publication.
- Tammy Barth, in the DDSD Provider Enrollment Unit, usually distributes memos to the field on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- PLEASE share any memos and other announcements from Tammy with your staff and visit the DDSD COVID-19 website for the most current updates.
- Therapists can provide services remotely and in-person based on the wishes of the person or their guardians. Teams should have already met to address plans to proceed with providing therapy services.
- Therapists are not prohibited from visiting with clients outside the home. Remember, COVID-Safe Practices must be followed at all times.
- Therapists and BSCs should continue to follow the Therapy and BSC Clinical Session Requirements memo (8/1/20) and the DDSD COVID-19 Response Status Update (10/1/20) for the most current guidance.
- When unique circumstances occur, teams may request exceptions for delivery of services through their Regional Office. This may include two therapists being present in the home at the same time. Please specify why the exception is needed, treatment goals, and the estimated number of visits needed.
- **WiFi Access:** As of 7/1/2020, all DD Waiver Residential (Supported Living, Family Living, and Intensive Medical Living) agencies were required to provide WiFi access to individuals as a “basic utility.” If you continue to experience difficulties with compliance, please contact your therapy consultant, Felicia Vidro, or file a RORA.
- **Appendix K (COVID-19):** Assistive Technology for telehealth access through DD Waiver:

- **Reference the AT Guidance document issued 10/16/20, “Assistive Technology Guidance for DD Waiver Providers and External Reviewers”**
- **DEADLINE:** The timeline to apply for COVID-19 related AT to support telehealth services has been extended to January 26, 2021.
- The decision for purchase of AT items continues to require an IDT meeting.
- To avoid delays, please be sure the AT application that is submitted is accurate, complete, and the calculations include the 10% fee where applicable. Please do not leave this until the last minute!

## Welcome



- Robin Leinwand, MOT, OTR/L, joined the Clinical Services Bureau team in September as the Statewide Occupational Therapy Consultant for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver.
- Feel free to contact Robin for assistance with OT clinical issues and general assistance related to therapy services through the DD Waiver. Her contact information is included at the end of this newsletter.

## Therapy Practice-related Resources

**International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI)** – <https://iddsi.org/>

*What is IDDSI?*

The IDDSI framework consists of standardized terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids used for individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all care settings, and in all cultures. The framework consists of a continuum of 8 levels (0-7), where drinks are measured from levels 0-4, while foods are measured from levels 3-7.

*Why IDDSI?*

- **Safety:** Multiple labels and definitions can cause confusion. IDDSI will decrease this confusion within and between settings.
- **Clinical Efficiency:** Avoids the need to re-assess to determine safe liquid and diet levels and reduces the need to confirm and clarify clinical information within and between settings.
- **Commercial Implications:** “Ready to use/off-the-shelf” items are consistent from manufacturer/supplier and similar to those produced in hospital/care facilities or at home.
- **Development of Clinical Evidence and Conducting Research:** To be able to compare research across healthcare and research facilities throughout the world to create strong clinical evidence.
- Many hospitals and acute care settings are already implementing IDDSI. Some Videofluoroscopic Swallow Studies (VFSS) results are recommending diet textures and liquid consistencies using the IDDSI framework. For these reasons, it is important that DDW therapists begin to get familiar with the IDDSI framework and transition to using it in the upcoming year.
- CSB will be scheduling meetings in the upcoming months to discuss the transition and implementation of the IDDSI Framework. We would like to get multiple perspectives on

how best to go about this process. If you have specific knowledge or interest related to IDDSI and want to assist in this process, please contact Demarre Sanchez, SLP Consultant.

### ***DDW Environmental Modifications***

- During the pandemic, many questions have arisen related to initiation and completion of Environmental Modifications. Just as with any service provided on the DDW Secondary Freedom of Choice (SFOC), environmental modifications can occur at this time. As with other service provision, completion of approved environmental modifications is determined by the person receiving services, the guardian, and the IDT, and should follow COVID-safe practices.
- If the team does not have access to a DDW therapist to complete an environmental modifications evaluation – for example, with an individual who does not have therapy provided through DDW – it is acceptable to have the evaluation completed by a qualified individual (ie: CM, home health or community-based therapist) other than an OT or PT. All other guidelines need to be followed for the completion of these modifications, per the DDW Standards.
- Per DDW standards, section 14.4.2 Environmental Modifications Service Requirements, #8: “The EMSP must coordinate with the therapist and/or *qualified individual* who provided the assessment to acknowledge, document and assure planned modifications will meet the person’s clinical and functional needs.”

### ***Therapy Documentation Form (TDF) Baseline Data –***

- A baseline is required for each objective created by the therapist. Please remember to fill out the baseline box to the right of each objective on the TDF. The baseline data allows for measurement of the regression, progress, or maintenance of each objective during the ISP Year. This data should also be reported in the Annual Re-evaluation and Progress Report.

### ***CARMP Process***

- CARMP development and review must include all team members. It is important that therapists and nursing communicate so information is consistent with medical orders and clear for the individual, FLP, DSP, and other team members.
- As of June 1, 2020, IDT’s should be completing the team review/revision process using the CARMP Draft in Therap. All therapists must have a Therap account (per DDSD Numbered Memo 2020-01).
- Please refer to Memo 2020-01, “Using *Questionnaire-CARMP Draft* in Therap: Process and New Required Elements Regarding Therap.”  
<https://www.nmhealth.org/publication/view/general/5809/>
- A recorded webinar and guide to using the CARMP Questionnaire in Therap is posted on Therap [https://help.therapservices.net/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/3789](https://help.therapservices.net/app/answers/detail/a_id/3789)
- For any questions regarding The CARMP Questionnaire in Therap, call Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen, ARM Coordinator (contact information is later in this newsletter).

### ***Protected Health Information (PHI)***

- PHI is any information in a medical record that can be used to identify an individual, and that was created, used, or disclosed to a covered entity and/or their business associate(s) during provision of a health care service, such as a diagnosis or treatment. It is important that all PHI be transmitted through a secure email platform. **DDSD requires everyone to use SCOMM through Therap!**
- If you do not have access to Therap or need to update your information or your caseload, please contact Hernando Martinez at [Hernando.martinez@state.nm.us](mailto:Hernando.martinez@state.nm.us)

**Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) update**

- Human Services Department (HSD) has issued contracts to FiServ (formerly FirstData) to implement EVV. EVV for Personal Care Services will be effective 1/1/21. The EVV system used for HCBS services in New Mexico is AuthentiCare which is managed by FiServ. DDW Therapy services are NOT included in EVV. For additional information, see: <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/pgsv/> and email sent to all providers by Tammy Barth, “DOH-HSD EVV Provider Communication 11.17.2020”.

**QA/QI Agency Reports are due soon!**

- Just a reminder that all Agency Quality Improvement Reports for 2020 are due February 15, 2021.
- Therapy agencies are highly encouraged to use the Therapy Agency Annual Quality Improvement Report Template V.2 6/2019 when submitting the Therapy Agency QI Report as the template includes all DD Waiver Standards QI requirements. Information may be incorporated into a comprehensive agency QI report per agency preference, but the QI Therapy Report must be submitted separately to the Provider Enrollment Unit. You can find a PDF copy of the template and the instructions at <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/pgsv/clinical/therapy/>. Please contact one of the therapy consultants for a WORD copy.
- Individual Agency Annual Quality Improvement **Plans** are to be submitted with your Provider Agency Recertification packet.

**Telehealth Ideas:** *What can I do while working remotely?*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check in with staff</li> <li>• check in with the individual</li> <li>• provide training</li> <li>• observe during meal time</li> <li>• try new activities using household items</li> <li>• learn chair yoga or other seated/movement exercises (and then include DSP so they can do it with the individual, too!)</li> <li>• cooking activities or arts &amp; crafts – provide packages of supplies to the</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>person you support through contactless drop-off</li> <li>backyard scavenger hunts<br/><a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/167970261086895749/">https://www.pinterest.com/pin/167970261086895749/</a></li> <li>simulated shower or bathing routine, if appropriate</li> <li>share your screen and show videos of interest or go on virtual outings</li> <li>help the individual write or dictate an email or text to a loved one</li> </ul> |
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- dance to the oldies on a video
- complete a walking/stepping challenge using a movement tracking device

**Therapist Telehealth spotlight:** *(we hope to continue to share information like this in future Updates...please send your stories, concerns, ideas to your therapy consultant)*

Jennifer Anderson, OT, who works in the NW Region, shared this with us:

“One of the SLP's and I work closely together, sharing the majority of our caseload, making teletherapy/ Zoom much more satisfying and doable. We have collaborated to set-up a weekly Zoom schedule with many focused topics. We do cooking classes, crafts, recreational games, story sharing and conversation-based Zoom sessions. We obtain and drop needed ingredients or supplies at homes along with directions of when and how to access the specific Zoom session. We send text reminders out daily to staff reminding them of topics and Zoom times. Though this does require a lot of leg work and some cost, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to engage with clients while sharing in the common experience of the activity.

Technology has played a huge role in service delivery and through the COVID AT allowance, we have been able to secure tablets and apps for many of our individuals. Three apps we are using a lot are: Pictello, Kids Story Builder, and Snap Core First. We have found staff to be very invested and appreciative for the direction and expectation of preparation for these sessions, even more so than when we were doing in person services. Throughout the week they support the clients in taking photos, programming, and creating stories that they will share during their Zoom session.

Though we very much miss the personal interactions with our clients, we feel that what we are able to do is meeting the needs of many of our clients, supporting skill development, providing support, and critical socialization opportunities. So, until we can safely gather together, we will just keep Zooming on!”

Telehealth Resources from national organizations:

AOTA: <https://www.aota.org/Practice/Manage/telehealth.aspx>

APTA: <https://www.apta.org/your-practice/practice-models-and-settings/telehealth-practice>

ASHA: <https://www.asha.org/about/telepractice-resources-during-covid-19/>

National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers:

<https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/>

### Clinical Resources

- **Research spotlight:** *Alzheimer's disease development in adults with Down syndrome: Caregivers' perspectives.* (Ilacqua A, Benedict J, Shoben A, Skotko BG, Matthews T, Benson B, Allain DC, American Journal of Medical Genetics, Part A. 2020 Jan; 182(1):104-114.)  
 “This study aimed to explore the perceived impact of Alzheimer’s disease development in adults with Down syndrome on caregivers by assessing caregiver knowledge, concerns, effect on personal life, and resource utilization...”

- American Society on Aging: Profound Lessons from COVID-19, Particularly on Leadership.** (Katz R) This is an interesting article about leadership challenges during the time of COVID-19. The article offers some insight on how to support co-workers and staff in addition to confirming what many of us have been experiencing throughout this new way of working. <https://generations.asaging.org/lessons-covid-19-particularly-leadership>
- The **American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD)** website has information specific to COVID-19 and people with IDD, as well as other content related to self-advocacy and webinar trainings. It is a great resource for therapists, teams, and our individuals receiving services: <https://www.aadmd.org/covid19-resources>
- Fall Prevention with the Otago Exercise Program**  
 The New Mexico Department of Health is sponsoring “Fall Prevention with the Otago Exercise Program,” an evidenced-based program validated to prevent falls in high-risk, community-dwelling older adults. This training is free, available for PT, PTA, OT, OTA and approved for 4 contact hours. Knowledge of this program by any therapists who work with older adults will be beneficial to promote fall prevention for your clients/patients. January 9, 8 am-12:30 pm, online via Zoom. Registration is required and class size is limited. For more information, email Beth Black, PT, at [BBlackPT@gmail.com](mailto:BBlackPT@gmail.com).
- Fall Risk Screening & Assessment in Clinical and Community Practice: Utilizing the CDC STEADI Falls Prevention Toolkit**  
 The New Mexico Department of Health will be sponsoring free, virtual STEADI falls prevention trainings approved for three contact hours. You will learn how to screen, assess, and intervene for fall risk, virtually and in-person. Training dates pending NMDOH contracting. If you would like to add your email to the notification list once dates are final, contact [janetpopp1@gmail.com](mailto:janetpopp1@gmail.com).

**CSB Training Opportunities**

**UPCOMING PA/STANDARDS and ARM TRAINING**

ALL ON-SITE TRAININGS ARE POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!		
Training (ON-LINE)	Time	Dates *only one session of each is required
<b>Aspiration Risk Management</b>	9:00 – 4:00	1/15/21, 3/5/21, 5/7/21
<b>Participatory Approach/Standards</b>	9:00 – 4:00	3/1/21, 4/30/21
Pre-register for on-line trainings at: <a href="https://ddsdtrain.cdd.unm.edu/Calendar.aspx">https://ddsdtrain.cdd.unm.edu/Calendar.aspx</a>		

**ANE REFRESHER Training** is now on the Train NM web-site. The official title of this course is “ANE Awareness.” Every therapist is required to complete this refresher annually after completing an in-person, full ANE Training prior to working with individuals in DDW. All versions of the DOH - ANE courses will count during COVID-19. Currently there are two online options available, ANE live streaming or the ANE Awareness. Both are available on the New Mexico Waiver training Hub: <http://cdd.unm.edu/other-disability-programs/disability-health-policy/ddsd-courses/ane-awareness.html> (You need to allow pop-ups for the courses to run effectively.)

**Clinical Services Bureau Contact Information**

- **CSB Bureau Chief:** Elizabeth Finley, [Elizabeth.Finley@state.nm.us](mailto:Elizabeth.Finley@state.nm.us)
- **CSB AT/Therapy Coordinator:** Felicia Vidro, [Felicia.Vidro@state.nm.us](mailto:Felicia.Vidro@state.nm.us)
- **CSB ARM Coordinator:** Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen, [Jacoba.Viljoen@state.nm.us](mailto:Jacoba.Viljoen@state.nm.us)
- **CSB Clinical Consultants:** *Contact us via E-mail, text, or phone call*
  - Mary Beth Schubauer, Physical Therapy  
[MaryBeth.Schubauer@state.nm.us](mailto:MaryBeth.Schubauer@state.nm.us) 505-238-2247 (cell)
  - Demarre Sanchez, Speech Therapy  
[Demarre.Sanchez@state.nm.us](mailto:Demarre.Sanchez@state.nm.us) 505-417-5264 (cell)
  - Robin Leinwand, Occupational Therapy  
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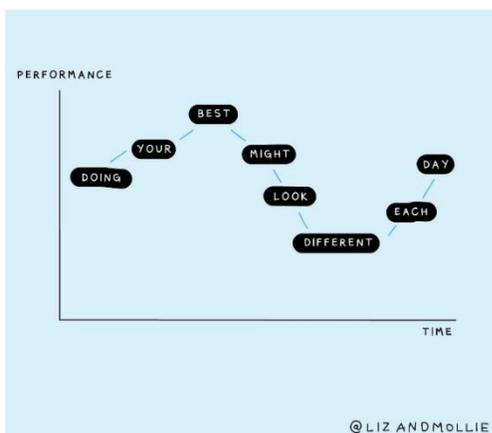


**Specialty Seating Clinic**

- Referrals for wheelchair, positioning, and adaptive equipment are being processed and appointments made for remote and in-person evaluations or wheelchair fittings, dependent on the need of the individual as assessed by SSC clinicians.
- Contact Jason Lavy, Specialty Seating Clinic Manager, via Therap, at (505) 222-4610 or at [specialty.seating@state.nm.us](mailto:specialty.seating@state.nm.us) for more information.

**SAFE Clinic**

- Any adult with I/DD who is experiencing challenges related to oral eating and/or tube feeding can be referred for specialized assessment and recommendations regarding eating/feeding, nutrition, positioning, and associated medical needs to support health, safety, and independence. SAFE Clinic appointments are currently occurring via remote technology.
- Call Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen PhD, MSN- Ed, RN, CCRN, CSB ARM Coordinator, SAFE Clinic Coordinator for further information. Office Phone: (505) 841-6188 / Fax# (505) 841-2987 or Email: [Jacoba.Viljoen@state.nm.us](mailto:Jacoba.Viljoen@state.nm.us)



**We appreciate you! Happy Winter!**

Thanks to all of you who, despite all the challenges, continue to go above and beyond to creatively support the individuals and teams you work with during this extraordinary healthcare emergency.